REMARKS

Claims 1-66 are pending in the application.

Claims 1-66 have been rejected.

Claims 1, 7, 9-10, 19-21, 23-28, 34, 36-37, 46-55, and 64 have been amended. Support for the amendments to claims 1, 10, 19, 23, 28, 37, 46, and 55 can be found on pages 5-10 of the specification. Claim 64 has been amended to provide correct punctuation. No new matter has been presented.

Claims 67, 68, and 69 have been added. Support for these claims can be found on pages 5-10 of the specification.

Rejection of Claims under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1, 3, 6-9, 19-21, 28, 30, 33-36, 46, 48, 51-54, and 64-66 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by "Request for Comments 2866: RADIUS Accounting" (hereinafter referred to as "RFC 2866"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

With respect to amended claim 1, the cited art fails to anticipate, teach, or suggest assigning a session identifier to a user, wherein the session identifier is assigned by a network access server; and providing the session identifier to an off-load server, wherein the off-load server is configured to establish a network connection between communication equipment operated by the user and a server operated by a network service provider.

In the rejection of the previous version of claim 1, the Examiner cites section 2.1 and section 5.5 of RFC 2866 as teaching "providing a session identifier to an off-load server." Office Action, p. 2. In the rejection, the Examiner equates the "forwarding server" taught in RFC 2866 with the "off-load server" recited in claim 1. The forwarding server is used in Proxy RADIUS. "The forwarding server logs the accounting request (if desired), adds its Proxy-State (if desired) after any other Proxy-State attributes, updates the Request Authenticator, and forwards the request to the remote server." RFC 2866 p. 4. Thus, the forwarding server described in RFC 2866 is a server that operates as a proxy according to the RADIUS protocol.

As described above, a forwarding server simply forwards a RADIUS request from the NAS to a remote server. In contrast to a forwarding server, the off-load server recited in claim 1

is "configured to establish a network connection between communication equipment operated by the user and a server operated by a network service provider." Thus, instead of simply modifying and forwarding a RADIUS request, as is done by the forwarding server in RFC 2866, an off-load server establishes a user's network connection with a network service provider. No teaching or suggestion has been provided in RFC 2866 (or any other cited reference) that a forwarding server, as described in RFC 2866, is an off-load server. Accordingly, RFC 2866 fails to teach or suggest "providing a session identifier to an off-load server." For at least this reason, claim 1 is patentable over the cited art. Claims 3, 6-9, 19-21, 28, 30, 33-36, 46, 48, 51-54, and 64-66 are also patentable over the cited art for similar reasons.

Claims 10-12, 37-39, and 55-57 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by "Request for Comments 2867: RADIUS Accounting Modifications for Tunnel Protocol Support" (hereinafter referred to as "RFC 2867"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

With respect to amended claim 10, the cited art fails to anticipate, teach, or suggest determining whether a session identifier value is provided by an access server to an offload server, wherein the access server is configured to perform pre-authentication processing for a user, and the off-load server is configured to establish a network connection between communication equipment operated by the user and a server operated by a network service provider.

In the rejection of the prior version of claim 10, the Examiner cites page 2, section 2 of RFC 2867, which recites:

> In auditing, the User-Name, Acct-Tunnel-Connection, Tunnel-Client-Endpoint and Tunnel-Server-Endpoint attributes are typically used to uniquely identify the call, allowing the Accounting-Request sent by the NAS to be reconciled with the corresponding Accounting-Request sent by the tunnel server.

The Examiner also cites section 4.1 of RFC 2867, which recites in part:

> [The Acct-Tunnel-Connection] Attribute indicates the identifier assigned to the tunnel session. It SHOULD be included in Accounting-Request packets which contain an Acct-Status-Type attribute having the value Start, Stop or any of the values described above. This attribute, along with the Tunnel-Client-Endpoint and Tunnel-Server-Endpoint attributes [3], may be used to provide a means to uniquely identify a tunnel session for auditing purposes.

The above-quoted sections of RFC 2867 describe how tunnel sessions can be identified and how identifying information can be used to reconcile accounting requests generated by a

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tunnel server and a NAS. As described in RFC 2866, accounting requests are RADIUS requests that are provided to an accounting server (e.g., see section 1 of RFC 2866). The cited portions of the reference make no mention of an off-load server, nor do these portions of the reference teach or suggest determining whether a session ID has been provided to such an off-load server, which is "configured to establish a network connection between the user and a network service provider." Furthermore, given that the cited sections of RFC 2867 are concerned with tunnel session identifiers used in accounting requests that are provided to an accounting server (as opposed to an off-load server), no such teachings or suggestions would be expected. Accordingly, claim 10 is patentable over the cited art. Claims 11-12, which depend from claim 10, are also patentable over the cited art for at least the foregoing reasons. Claims 37-39 and 55-57 are patentable over the cited art for similar reasons.

Rejection of Claims under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 2, 4-5, 29, 31-32, 47, and 49-50 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over RFC 2866 in view of RFC 2867. Claims 13-18, 22, 40-54, and 58-63 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over RFC 2867 in view of RFC 2866. Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections, for at least the foregoing reasons presented above.

New Claims

Claims 67-70 are patentable over the cited art. With respect to claim 67, the cited art does not teach or suggest a method in which both the network access server and the off-load server send the session identifier to an Authentication, Authorization, and Accounting (AAA) module. With respect to claims 68-70, the cited art does not teach or suggest a method that involves assigning a session identifier to a call detected by a network access server and providing the session identifier from the network access server to an off-load server, wherein the off-load server provides one of Point-to-Point Protocol (PPP), Serial Line Internet Protocol (SLIP), Multipoint Point-to-Point Protocol, and PPP over Ethernet (PPPoE) service to the network access server.

CONCLUSION

In view of the amendments and remarks set forth herein, the application and the claims therein are believed to be in condition for allowance without any further examination and a notice to that effect is solicited. Nonetheless, should any issues remain that might be subject to resolution through a telephonic interview, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at 512-439-5087.

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as First Class Mail in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop RCE, COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS, P. O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on _Aug. 25, 2005_
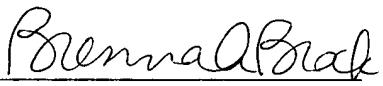
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